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Spy Trial Postponed

Ghanaian National Charged in CIA Case

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The trial of a Ghanaian national on charges of obtaining CIA secrets in the West African country was delayed until Dec. 9 after a hearing yesterday in Alexandria federal court that was closed on the grounds of national security.

Before the hearing, federal prosecutors had planned to begin the trial of Michael A. Soussoudis, a first cousin of of Ghana's leader, Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings, today.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Justin Williams and lawyers for Soussoudis declined to comment on whether Soussoudis changed his plea from not guilty during the hearing, which was closed by Judge Claude A. Hilton under a provision of the Classified Information Procedures Act (CIPA).

Ghana's ambassador to the United States, Eric Otoo, was allowed to attend the hearing, but the diplomat also declined to comment on the proceedings.

CIPA hearings are usually held to allow a judge to determine whether classified information is relevant to a case and should be allowed into evidence. Soussoudis' lawyer, Plato Cacheris, would say yesterday only that "we are seeking documents."

A State Department official said yesterday that Felix Peasah, one of two Ghanaians charged by that nation last month with spying for the CIA, had worked at the U.S. Embassy there for five years, but said he did not know what Peasah did at the embassy.

The second man, Theodore Atiedu, was employed by Ghana's intelligence service when he was arrested and Peasah was described as a former intelligence official, according to Ghanaian sources.

The charges against Soussoudis stem from his relationship with a former CIA employe. Prosecutors have alleged that Soussoudis, a member of Ghana's intelligence service, solicited and received classified information from the employe, who has pleaded guilty to two counts of disclosing classified information.